



CATAWBA COUNTY

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CATAWBA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS CELEBRATE NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK MONTH IN MARCH 2008

Who are the people in your life you consider to have strengths? The answer is simple – every person, family and community has strengths from which they can draw when times are difficult. And social workers can help build upon those strengths. Catawba County Public Health, along with the National Association of Social Workers, proudly announces National Social Work Month 2008.

This year's theme – Building on Strengths: Help Starts Here – focuses on the important strengths of the individual, family and community. Understanding and utilizing these strengths are essential to improving the emotional health and well-being of society. "The foundation for the growth and change in any individual, family or community is existing strengths," says Elizabeth Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH, executive director of NASW. "Social workers are trained from the 'strengths perspective,' emphasizing the abilities and resources available, while trying to reach their goals."

Strengthening people and providing support are priorities of the social work profession. Wherever there is a problem with an individual, family, or community, social workers look for the strengths that can be used as a starting point for further growth. "The strengths perspective approach fosters hope by focusing on the positive, rather than on feelings of helplessness," says Angela Holcomb, Social Worker Supervisor with Catawba County Public Health's Maternity Care Coordination program. "Individuals, families and communities can feel empowered by looking at and working with their strengths."

Public Health's social workers are called Maternity Care Coordinators. The Maternity Care Coordination (MCC) Program is a case management program that follows prenatal patients during their pregnancy up to eight weeks postpartum. If there are problems or concerns that can adversely affect the unborn or new baby, the MCC social worker develops a plan designed to resolve their problems and assists the mother in completing a plan by contacting them at least one time per month. During these contacts, the social worker evaluates the patient's progress, assists with transportation and housing, assists with following up on missed appointments, and provides educational information related to her pregnancy.

Social Work Month also provides an opportunity for social workers to highlight the essential role they play in dealing with some of America's most difficult problems. Through education, training and dedication, social workers provide assistance in many different areas of practice including health, aging, mental health, child welfare, cancer, end of life, adolescent health, HIV/AIDS and family violence.

To find comprehensive information about the role of social work and where to go for assistance for these and other issues, visit www.HelpStartsHere.org. Locally contact Catawba County Public Health at 828.695.5800 for questions or more information.

"Keeping the Spirit Alive Since 1842!"

